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NSC BRIEFING

20 September 1960

BERLIN

- I. Because of his desire to focus world attention on Berlin prior to UN, Khrushchev is permitting East Germans to undertake a new campaign to raise tensions on Berlin; East German regime on 8 September imposed permanent restrictions on travel of West Germans to East Berlin.
 - A. Move violates Four-Power agreements on freedom of movement within city, but has not affected movement of those who work in one sector of city and live in another.
 1. Is step toward incorporating East Berlin into East Germany by making own laws directly applicable to East Berlin, in effect giving city sector border the "legal" character of an East German frontier.
 2. East German regime is emphasizing point that West Berlin is not a part of West Germany.
 - B. Ulbricht regime wishes demonstrate "sovereignty" and show its right and ability to impose arbitrary controls on movement within city.
 1. By concentrating on West Germans rather than Allies, Communists probably consider themselves on safer ground and that their actions less likely provoke strong reaction.
- II. East Germans may also attempt introduce restrictions on travel of West Germans to West Berlin.
 - A. East German officials have stated Four-Power agreements on free access to Berlin null and void and claimed GDR not bound by agreements of USSR.

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B. They have warned Bonn not to retaliate against restrictions on travel, saying this would only hasten measures making West Berlin "free city."

III. Soviet Berlin Commandant Zakharov on 13 September supported the East German position and warned the Western Powers that they must bear full responsibility for the consequences of "misuse" of the air corridors which were provided to meet the requirements of the Western garrisons in the city.

A. Zakharov's strong endorsement of East Germany's "sovereignty" over its territory in this context suggests that the USSR will support future East German efforts to assert some degree of control over civilian air access to the city.

1. USSR may be considering some step to bring East Germans into flight clearance procedures; such tactics would be aimed at forcing Western civilian airlines into either acknowledging East German control, operating without flight safety guarantees from the Soviet elements in BASC, or not flying to Berlin.
2. East German regime is trying to sell the idea that Western airlines must negotiate with it for overflight privileges.
3. During the past week there has been an increase in "near misses" between Western aircraft and Soviet fighters in the Berlin corridors, suggesting that the Communists are attempting to harass commercial pilots into refusing to fly.

IV. Bonn is concerned that too strong counter measures will provoke increased East German harassments and a more serious crisis, and Adenauer has told his cabinet to avoid any "rash moves," and wants Willy Brandt to stop demanding Western reprisals.

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- A. Vice-Chancellor Erhard has told Ambassador Dowling that Bonn could not undertake economic sanctions against East Germany without prior agreement among the four Western powers.
- V. At the UN, the Soviets may point to dangers in the Berlin situation to emphasize the urgency of their peace and disarmament proposals.
 - A. For this reason, they will almost certainly keep pot boiling.
 - B. They are not likely, however, to create a major crisis on Berlin during the UNGA session, as this would be incompatible with the peaceful posture they will probably seek to present there.
 - 1. Furthermore, the Soviets probably doubt that their real position on Berlin would have wide support in the UN: most UN members probably would favor maintenance of the status quo.

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